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Fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1561 (2004) of 17 September 2004, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 19 September 2005 and requested me to continue to report periodically on progress made in the implementation of the mandate of UNMIL. The present report was prepared pursuant to that resolution and covers developments since my report of 10 September 2004 (S/2004/725).

II. Major political developments

2. During the reporting period, further progress was made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and in the peace process. Such progress included the official completion of disarmament and demobilization on 31 October 2004, the formal disbandment of the armed factions on 3 November, the commencement of the repatriation of refugees on 1 October and also the resettlement of internally displaced persons on 8 November. Furthermore, State authority has been extended to several additional counties and the training of recruits for the new Liberian National Police Service has continued. However, the process also encountered several major challenges, including the troubling disturbances that took place from 28 to 31 October, the continued disputes among the leadership of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), violent demonstrations by various disaffected groups and the slow progress in the reintegration of ex-combatants. Additional challenges include the limited capacity on the part of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to provide social services and consolidate State authority, the disputes among the former armed factions regarding the distribution of government posts, and the delays in the passage of the electoral reform bill.

3. While investigations into the causes of the October disturbances continue, reports indicate that a land dispute may have triggered the initial rioting, which rapidly assumed ethnic and religious dimensions involving members of the predominantly Mandingo ethnic group. At the same time, the situation was also repeatedly exploited for their own ends by disgruntled combatants awaiting reintegration, loyalists of former President Charles Taylor and some elements of the

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opposing factions within LURD. During the disturbances, a number of houses belonging to Aisha Conneh (the estranged wife of the LURD Chairperson, Sekou Conneh) and members of the LURD faction loyal to her, were the targets of attacks. In addition, several churches, mosques and residential and commercial properties were burnt down in Monrovia. A mosque was also burned in Kakata.

4. UNMIL initially responded to the riots by deploying its civilian police and formed police units in Monrovia. As the situation escalated, UNMIL troops undertook robust actions to bring the situation under control and forestall further acts of violence in the affected areas. A United Nations infantry company was redeployed from Buchanan, while two formed police units were redeployed from Gbarnga and Buchanan to Monrovia. The UNMIL Quick Reaction Force conducted robust patrols in all areas of Monrovia, while its aviation unit undertook both aerial reconnaissance and show-of-force patrols over the city. In addition, troops conducted cordon and search operations based on information received by UNMIL. The main roads into Monrovia were also sealed, following reports that former LURD elements were being brought in from Bomi county.

5. My Special Representative for Liberia, Jacques Paul Klein, members of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and representatives of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, made several radio appeals throughout the disturbances, calling upon individuals and groups to desist from further acts of violence. In addition, a daylight curfew was imposed by the Chairman of the National Transitional Government, Gyude Bryant. The disturbances resulted in 208 injured, 200 arrested for violent offences and 19 deaths. In the aftermath of the disturbances, UNMIL facilitated consultations among community and religious leaders. Furthermore, the United Nations civilian police teams increased their community sensitization activities in six counties.

6. During the reporting period, the continuing disputes among the LURD leadership posed serious problems for the peace process and the functioning of the National Transitional Government of Liberia. The disagreement within the faction came to a head following the September appointment by Chairman Bryant of a Sekou Conneh loyalist as the new Managing Director of the National Ports Authority. Subsequently, UNMIL received reports that the LURD splinter group loyal to Aisha Conneh, and led by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Kabineh Ja'neh, was hatching plans to unseat Chairman Bryant and unravel the peace process based on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Credence was lent to these reports on 18 September, when the group issued a press statement calling upon the international community to assist in removing Chairman Bryant from office and later sent a delegation to Accra, Ghana, to solicit the support of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President Kufuor.

7. On 13 and 15 October, UNMIL met with other international partners to determine actions to be taken to guard against the derailment of the peace process. It was generally agreed that the National Transitional Government of Liberia should be encouraged to take steps to address the grievances of the population, including: paying civil servants' salary arrears; instituting strict measures to effectively address corruption; ensuring transparency in the management of public funds; and improving its communication with the public. It was also agreed that the National Transitional Government should consult actively with civil society groups to gain the support and understanding of the Liberian people. Chairman Bryant was also

urged to convene regular Cabinet meetings, so as to ensure transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making.

8. On 18 October, the Implementation Monitoring Committee issued a joint press statement warning that the international community would not allow any disruption of the functioning of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, including the unseating of Chairman Bryant. The statement referred to Security Council resolutions 1521 (2003) and 1532 (2004), which had provided for measures to be taken against any individual engaged in activities aimed at undermining peace and stability in Liberia and the subregion.

9. However, divisions within LURD deepened on 27 October, when the Aisha Conneh-Kabineh Ja'neh group unilaterally elected new executive members for LURD. At a meeting on 28 October, the International Contact Group on Liberia, UNMIL and other international stakeholders questioned the need to elect a new leadership, given that all armed factions were to be disbanded following the completion of disarmament on 31 October.

10. On 27 October, my Special Representative travelled to Conakry, Guinea, to solicit the assistance of President Lasana Conté in encouraging the Liberian factions to work together constructively in support of the peace process. On 30 October, UNMIL facilitated the travel of the leadership of the two opposing LURD factions to Freetown, Sierra Leone, for a reconciliation meeting hosted by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the meeting, containing a proposal to transform LURD into a political movement. However, feuding flared up again following their return to Monrovia.

11. During the period under review, there were growing signs of public dissatisfaction with the limited progress of the National Transitional Government of Liberia in improving basic living conditions. Several protests occurred linked to low or delayed payment of salaries, labour disputes, poor teaching conditions and high registration fees for high school students.

12. On 19 October, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1532 (2004), the Minister of Justice announced that the National Transitional Government of Liberia had commenced legal action to freeze the economic assets of former Commissioner of the Maritime Bureau, Benoni Urey, and former Finance Minister, Emmanuel Shaw. However, following a legal petition by Mr. Urey and Mr. Shaw claiming that only judges had the authority to freeze the assets of Liberian citizens, the Liberian Supreme Court on 21 October ordered the Minister of Justice to suspend the assets freeze until a hearing on the issue on 2 November. As of 1 December, the Supreme Court had yet to rule on the matter.

III. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

13. The mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, namely, the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia, have continued to meet regularly. The Joint Monitoring Committee, chaired by the UNMIL Force Commander, met twice during the reporting period. Its tasks have

now been fulfilled, following the completion of disarmament, demobilization and disbandment of the armed factions.

14. The International Contact Group on Liberia continued to cooperate closely with UNMIL and ECOWAS to move the peace process forward. On 17 September, the Group met in Washington, D.C., where it noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme. It underscored the need for all Liberian parties to reaffirm their commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and called upon the parties to refrain from actions that might jeopardize the work of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and to work jointly in the interest of the Liberian people. It also emphasized the need for full transparency and accountability in the management of public funds by the National Transitional Government. Recognizing the linkages between the conflicts in the region, the Group agreed to extend its remit to the Mano River basin, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. During the reporting period, the representatives of the Group in Monrovia held weekly meetings with Chairman Bryant.

15. The first meeting of the National Transitional Government of Liberia-United Nations-ECOWAS Coordination Mechanism took place on 20 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting welcomed the progress made in the efforts to bring peace to Liberia. At the same time, it also recognized the important challenges that lay ahead.

IV. Deployment of the Mission

16. As at 1 December, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,541 (see annex I). During the reporting period, a third Ethiopian battalion completed its deployment in River Cess county. However, the projected deployments of Ethiopian companies to Tiapie and Toe Town in Grand Gedeh county, Fishtown in Maryland county and Grand Cess in Grand Kru county, as well as the deployment of a company from Pakistan to Foya in Lofa county, were postponed pending the establishment of reliable road links, which would allow logistic support to these locations.

17. As at 1 December, out of an authorized strength of 1,115, the UNMIL civilian police component included 1,104 personnel, with 615 police officers, 10 correctional officers and 479 officers in four formed police units. Despite continuing efforts to increase female representation, only 6 per cent of the component are women.

V. Security situation

18. Despite a relative calm during most of the reporting period, the security situation in the country was marred by the disturbances described in paragraph 3 above and by several other violent incidents.

19. In Monrovia, on 10 September, activities were temporarily disrupted as workers at the Freeport protested over a pay dispute. The same day, students and staff of the University of Liberia also demonstrated in protest over the appointment by Chairman Bryant of a new University President. Furthermore, the increasing incidents of vigilante and mob violence, which had resulted in several deaths,

continued to be a worrying trend, particularly in Monrovia. Outside Monrovia, several violent incidents were reported, including armed robberies.

20. UNMIL troops continued to monitor the situation on Liberia's borders through land and air patrols. Security along the border with Sierra Leone and Guinea has remained calm, and interaction with troops from the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has continued. In early November, UNMIL also increased its presence and patrolling along the border with Côte d'Ivoire, owing to the deteriorating situation there. Furthermore, on 9 November, my Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Coordination led an inter-agency mission to assess Liberia's ability to receive influxes of Ivorian refugees. As at 1 December, over 10,000 refugees, mostly women and children, had crossed into Liberia.

VI. The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme

21. The disarmament and demobilization exercise officially ended on 31 October, as unanimously agreed upon by the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. On 2 November, 48 senior commanders from the three armed factions handed in their weapons and demobilized in a symbolic ceremony. Subsequently, on 3 November, the three armed factions signed a joint declaration attesting to the completion of disarmament and demobilization and acknowledging the cessation of their military existence with the disbandment of their forces and command structures.

22. On 2 November, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration agreed that UNMIL would continue to conduct mobile disarmament operations in locations that were difficult to access, such as Barclayville in Grand Kru county, and Foya, Kolahun and Vahun in Lofa county. Meanwhile, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners have disarmed and demobilized 588 children associated with the fighting forces, using mobile teams. The Commission also agreed that there would be a grace period in November, during which individuals could voluntarily hand in weapons and ammunition at UNMIL checkpoints without fear of prosecution, but also without being eligible for entry into the rehabilitation and reintegration programme. Thereafter, from 1 December, individuals in illegal possession of weapons would be penalized in accordance with Liberian laws. In cooperation with the Liberian authorities, UNMIL is developing a strategy to address the problem of the recovery of illegal weapons.

23. As at 1 December, a total of 101,449 combatants had been disarmed and demobilized since December 2003. These figures include 22,313 women, 8,547 boys and 2,477 girls. By the same date, 27,892 weapons had been collected and over 23,500 had been destroyed and more weapons are destroyed daily at UNMIL Force headquarters. Some 33,000 pieces of heavy munitions and unexploded ordnance, as well as 7 million rounds of small arms ammunition, have been collected and destroyed. UNMIL has continued to make payments of the second tranche of the transitional safety allowance to demobilized combatants. As at 1 December, 76,185 combatants had received their full allowance in 11 locations throughout the country.

24. By 1 December, 612 disarmed combatants had identified themselves as foreign nationals: 50 from Côte d'Ivoire, 1 from Ghana, 308 from Guinea, 4 from Mali, 7 from Nigeria and 242 from Sierra Leone. UNMIL has initiated discussions with neighbouring countries on their repatriation. Between 11 and 12 October, a team from UNMIL visited Sierra Leone to discuss with the Government and international partners the modalities for the repatriation of adult Sierra Leonean ex-combatants in Liberia.

25. A major challenge in Liberia is the implementation of an effective rehabilitation and reintegration programme for ex-combatants. As of 1 December, the total caseload was just under 107,000 which included some 5,000 combatants presented to the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration by the former factions without weapons. Of these, some 7,000 children will be absorbed in programmes run by UNICEF. To date, 16,190 ex-combatants have been absorbed by projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Trust Fund, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Commission. In addition, these same programme partners have planned projects that would absorb a further 40,000 ex-combatants. Some 43,000 ex-combatants still need to be provided for. Some $60 million is urgently being sought to address remaining funding shortfalls for the rehabilitation and reintegration programme.

VII. Support for security sector reform

26. During the reporting period, significant strides have been made in the restructuring of the police force. Between November 2003 and June 2004, an interim police force comprising 646 officers was trained by the United Nations to restore law and order in Monrovia. Thereafter, UNMIL undertook an extensive recruitment drive for new police recruits, in collaboration with the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the Liberian National Police. Six classes, comprising 854 screened and vetted recruits, have now undergone rigorous academic training at the National Police Academy of which four are now undertaking field training. The registration exercise to verify the number of Liberian National Police personnel has been completed. To date, 9,353 personnel have been registered from the law enforcement agencies and the process is continuing.

27. A programme to return displaced police personnel is under way with 233 officers deployed by 29 November and further deployments scheduled for early 2005. The formal inauguration of the new National Liberian Police Service is to take place before 1 July 2005. In addition, UNMIL is assisting the Liberian National Police in developing a gender policy to promote gender mainstreaming in education and training.

28. Despite the achievements in the police sector, the National Transitional Government of Liberia is still not meeting its overall obligations under the reform and restructuring process. Programmes need to be established for the reintegration of those officers of the Liberian National Police who were phased out of the force, and for the timely integration of police academy graduates into the National Police Service. In addition, the Police still lacks the necessary logistics to effectively perform its functions, including vehicles, communication and other equipment.

Improving the capacity of the national police is a critical element in the restoration of the rule of law in Liberia. Donors are encouraged to urgently consider providing resources for this vital area.

29. In the meantime, the Government of the United States of America has taken the lead in providing material and technical assistance for the restructuring of the new Armed Forces of Liberia, as outlined in the "Blue Paper" developed by UNMIL, in consultation with the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the United States Department of Defense. The Paper provides an outline for a new defence policy that would secure territorial integrity, including the establishment of a new coastguard to provide maritime patrols. UNMIL is assisting in redocumenting the Armed Forces personnel and in establishing a database of personnel information and service history, which will be used to determine which soldiers will be retrenched or pensioned, as well as their benefits. The main challenge facing the restructuring is a lack of funds with which to finance pensions and buyouts.

VIII. Rule of law

30. UNMIL has continued to consult with representatives of the national legal and judicial institutions, United Nations organizations, interested international partners and civil society on resolving the many problems facing the Liberian justice system. Unfortunately, reform efforts continue to be hampered by a lack of qualified personnel and material resources. Some headway has been made in securing funds to support infrastructural rehabilitation work in a few counties, training of national legal professionals in the justice sector, and also hiring of consultants. In addition, the United States Government has provided $1 million to assist with justice sector reform.

31. UNMIL has continued its monitoring, advisory, evaluation and training activities in rule-of-law institutions. It has also deployed legal and judicial officers to the interior of the country to help implement reforms needed to strengthen the justice system. UNMIL is currently assisting in establishing a public defender's office in Monrovia. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Mission is also developing proposals for the revision, harmonization and codification of laws.

32. The UNMIL corrections component has continued to work with the Ministry of Justice and other partners in improving the correctional system. The Monrovia Central Prison and the prisons in Kakata, Bondiway, Sanniquellie and Gbarnga are currently operational, while the recently renovated Buchanan prison is expected to reopen shortly. The October disturbances in Liberia highlighted some of the key problems associated with the correctional facilities. The prison population, which usually averages about 287, rose to 550 during the disturbances. As a result of inadequate staffing and the poor conditions of buildings, a number of escapes occurred from various facilities.

33. Within Monrovia, the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the World Food Programme (WFP) are providing prisoners with daily food rations, while outside the city, food is supplied solely by WFP. Medical and hygiene supplies are also provided by private individuals and the International Committee of the Red Cross. UNMIL is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to develop a budget for basic necessities.

IX. Restoration and consolidation of State authority throughout the country

34. Some progress has been made in the restoration of State authority, while the Minister of Internal Affairs has conducted consultations for the selection of candidates for county superintendent posts in 11 counties. During the reporting period, Chairman Bryant submitted the names of eight nominees for these posts to the National Transitional Government of Liberia for confirmation. In collaboration with UNDP, UNMIL has facilitated the establishment of District Development Councils to enhance community participation in local projects and governance. Meanwhile, the United Nations Office for Project Services assisted in the development of a national plan for reconstruction, including recommendations for the rehabilitation of the Freeport area in Monrovia.

35. UNMIL continues to assist the National Transitional Government of Liberia with the deployment of officials, particularly at the border entry points between Liberia and neighbouring countries. In particular, the Mission facilitated the deployment of an additional 257 officials from the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. In addition, 45 immigration officers were deployed to Maryland county in November, following the outbreak of hostilities in Côte d'Ivoire and the subsequent influx of Ivorian refugees into Liberia. UNMIL also assisted with the deployment of Customs and Internal Revenue officials to seven counties.

36. However, the deployed officials' ability to function effectively continues to be seriously hampered by a lack of adequate office facilities, equipment, and other logistic support. These problems should be partly alleviated by an assistance package of $4,464,927 provided by USAID for the renovation and furnishing of administrative buildings in nine counties.

37. In the meantime, the civil affairs officers of UNMIL are co-located in 17 ministries, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, the Monrovia City Council, and 14 major agencies and parastatals. The officers have facilitated capacity-building and the mobilization of donor support for the Government's recovery programmes, within the context of the Results-focused Transition Framework. The UNMIL civil affairs county coordinators are also deployed in the 15 counties and continue to support the restoration of State authority and the revival of government institutions. UNMIL has also established Housing and Property Committees in five counties, to assist in resolving disputes over the illegal occupation of properties belonging to returnees.

38. UNMIL has continued to monitor progress made by the Government in establishing mechanisms for the proper management of diamonds and timber, the trade in which is subject to Security Council sanctions. From 27 to 29 October, Liberia participated in the Kimberley Process annual plenary in Ottawa, Canada. The Government subsequently expressed its commitment to expediting establishment of a certification scheme for the country's rough diamonds, as required under the Kimberley Process. The United Nations is also providing security and logistic support to the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice and Finance, to address the outstanding issues of ownership, land tenure, management and physical status in respect of the nation's timber plantations. At the same time, the United Nations is assisting the Forestry

Development Authority in developing reforms for the transparent management of forest resources.

X. Elections

39. In a welcome development, the long-awaited election of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly representative for Grand Kru county took place on 12 October, bringing the Assembly to its full strength of 76 members and fulfilling a major benchmark in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

40. On 30 August, the National Elections Commission submitted the proposed electoral reform bill to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. However, as indicated in paragraph 2 above, the Assembly had delayed passing the bill for several months. The main cause of the delay was the Assembly's disagreement with the Commission's proposal to allocate seats in the House of the Representatives based on the number of registered voters in each of the 15 counties rather than on actual population figures, as there would be insufficient time before the October 2005 elections to hold a census. Assembly members insisted that the 1985 seat allocation formula be used, while the Commission argued that such allocation was neither based on census figures nor in conformity with international standards of equitable representation in a legislative institution.

41. To try to overcome the problem, Chairman Bryant established a committee, comprising advisers to the Chairman, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, UNMIL, the National Elections Commission and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, to develop a compromise proposal that would meet international electoral standards. On 13 November, the committee agreed that each of the 15 counties would be allocated a minimum of two seats, with the remaining 34 seats allocated on the basis of the results of the voter registration exercise. Under this proposal, the Commission would also develop mechanisms to allow internally displaced persons and returnees who had not yet resettled to register for their county of origin, irrespective of where they had registered to vote.

42. Unfortunately, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly did not introduce the compromise solution during its final debate on the bill on 19 November. Instead, it adopted amendments that implied that a national census should be conducted before seats were allocated. It also adopted a provision referring to the seat allocation formula of 1985. The Assembly also rejected proposals to increase penalties for bribery and other electoral offences as well as the proposed special measures for the registration of internally displaced persons. It also deleted paragraphs from the draft bill that had noted the need to adopt appropriate measures for increasing the participation of women in the electoral process. On 6 December, Chairman Bryant vetoed the provisions in the bill that were considered unacceptable and returned it to the Assembly with proposals aimed at reverting to the consensus proposal, previously agreed upon.

43. The protracted delay in adopting the electoral reform law has hindered operational preparations for the October 2005 elections. The process cannot afford further setbacks and delays. Moreover, the adoption of electoral legislation that does not guarantee minimum standards of fairness is likely to jeopardize donor support.

XI. Human rights and protection of civilians

44. UNMIL human rights and protection officers are present in 11 counties where they work with the local authorities and civil society organizations. The section has also continued its protection and monitoring activities. It has also focused on supporting the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, as well as on promoting the adoption by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly of the draft enabling legislation for both Commissions.

45. UNMIL has continued to work extensively with national counterparts to counter sexual offences against young children and to promote the rights of prisoners, improve access to justice and fair trials, and ameliorate the human rights situation of internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees.

46. The fact that, with the support of UNMIL, on 22 September, Chairman Bryant signed, ratified and acceded to 18 international treaties (see annex II) marked a significant step in providing the legislative basis for the protection of human rights in the country.

XII. The humanitarian situation

47. On 1 October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in close collaboration with the National Transitional Government of Liberia, began the facilitated voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries. This exercise followed the signing of agreements between UNHCR and Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea, providing the legal framework for the repatriation. UNHCR expects that close to 100,000 Liberian refugees will return home by the end of this year, most spontaneously. UNHCR is also undertaking reintegration projects for the returnees.

48. The official completion of the disarmament and demobilization operation on 31 October also helped create favourable conditions for the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin, with the formal launch of the assisted voluntary returns on 8 November. It is estimated that there are between 260,000 and 300,000 internally displaced persons in Liberia. As at 1 December, more than 4,036 displaced individuals, representing 865 families, had been assisted in returning to their communities, out of a total of 222,379 persons registered for return assistance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A comprehensive plan for the reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons and ex-combatants is being finalized.

49. Given the enormous reconstruction and development needs in the country, the UNMIL Humanitarian Information Centre and Humanitarian Coordination Section are undertaking mapping exercises to ensure that humanitarian resources are focused on key areas of return. UNHCR is also monitoring population flows in areas of initial return, in preparation for future flows of returnees.

50. United Nations organizations have increased their deployment throughout Liberia to deal with returnees. In October, WFP opened a number of sub-offices, allowing it to improve its distribution programmes. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is rehabilitating housing and promoting

reconciliation among ex-combatants and their communities by involving the former in the process.

51. Food aid is still vital for meeting the needs of several vulnerable groups in Liberia. WFP has been distributing some 5,800 metric tons of food each month to over 500,000 Liberians. WFP requires some $18.7 million to avert a food shortfall between November and April 2005. Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working to restore agricultural productive capacity and ensure food security throughout Liberia. It is providing fishing equipment and training to some 1,500 crisis-affected fishermen, as well as food production assistance to 13,000 war-affected farm families in peri-urban Monrovia and Margibi county.

52. The UNICEF "Back to School" programme is making steady progress. Approximately 12,000 primary school teachers have completed an orientation programme and 660 teachers, of whom 53 per cent are women, have obtained primary school teaching certificates. Five hundred teachers have been trained in the accelerated learning programme teaching methodology.

53. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) commenced its post-conflict education reconstruction activities in the country on 15 September. UNESCO plans include facilitating workshops for upgrading teacher trainers and reprinting formal school curricula for distribution among schoolteachers.

54. UNICEF has made further progress in the reactivation of health clinics and routine immunization at local health facilities. Three hundred and ninety health workers have been trained in the management of malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health, supported by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), in October and November, immunized 1,799,861 children against polio. UNICEF also supported a government team that is monitoring water quality and developing an early warning system for potential cholera hot spots.

55. The 2004 Consolidated Appeals Process for Liberia, which included a revised requirement of $140.5 million for humanitarian activities, was 47 per cent-funded. For 2005, the United Nations Country Team has decided to integrate the humanitarian needs into the Results-focused Transition Framework. Donors are encouraged to provide the necessary resources to adequately address the considerable humanitarian needs of the people of Liberia.

XIII. HIV/AIDS

56. UNMIL has continued to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness, sensitization and personal risk assessment presentations for civilian and military personnel. The establishment of a voluntary confidential counselling and testing centre in the Mission is being planned. UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the National AIDS Control Programme are working together on elaborating a national HIV/AIDS information, education and behavioural change communications strategy.

XIV. Gender issues

57. The UNMIL Gender Unit has focused on ensuring that some 22,000 women associated with the fighting forces have access to reintegration opportunities. It is also developing a gender policy and undertook awareness training for the Liberian National Police and corrections officers. Several gender-related problems affecting the corrections system have also been identified. Assistance was provided to the Ministry for Gender and Development in drawing up a provision for inclusion in the draft electoral reform bill that advocated the increased involvement of women in the electoral process. Technical assistance has also been provided to the Ministry for Rural Development on identifying strategies for building capacities of rural women to gain sustainable livelihoods through the National Rural Women's Programme.

XV. National recovery

58. With the support of the United Nations, the National Transitional Government of Liberia has made significant progress in establishing the Results-focused Transition Framework Implementation and Monitoring Committee (RIMCO) and the RIMCO Support Office for the overall implementation and monitoring of national recovery programmes. The National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNMIL, UNDP and the World Bank work closely together within these structures.

59. As at 1 December, approximately $355 million of the $520 million pledged at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia held in February had been received. The Core Group on Liberia, comprising donor countries and international organizations, met in Washington, D.C., on 17 September, to review the progress made in national recovery and the status of donor pledges. It noted the slow progress in rehabilitating several key sectors, including sanitation, electricity and telecommunications. Discussions centred on the need for the Results-focused Transition Framework to ensure that donor funding focuses on high-priority areas, and the implementation of a comprehensive reintegration plan for ex-combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

XVI. Regional aspects

60. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has continued to improve its relations with neighbouring countries. On 15 October, Chairman Bryant visited Sierra Leone where he met with President Kabbah to discuss bilateral regional cooperation among the Mano River Union countries. UNMIL continues to work closely with the other peacekeeping and political missions in West Africa. During the November crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, UNMIL provided the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) with logistics support, including air assets, to assist in the evacuation of United Nations personnel.

61. The Force Commanders of UNMIL, UNOCI and UNAMSIL met in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 6 to 8 October. Additionally, personnel from UNMIL Force headquarters and from the Senegalese battalion deployed in Maryland county have attended meetings in western Côte d'Ivoire to discuss cross-border coordination and cooperation issues. It was agreed that regular coordination meetings would be held at battalion and sector levels. The Force Commanders also met in Dakar, Senegal,

on 2 and 3 December, and discussed enhancing cooperation and the provision of mutual support in the event of further security crises in a particular mission area, among other issues.

62. On 3 December, UNMIL hosted the third meeting of Heads of United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in West Africa, which was chaired by my Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah. It was attended by my Special Representatives for Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, as well as my Representative for Guinea-Bissau. The meeting focused on the recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire, humanitarian coordination between UNMIL and UNOCI, inter-mission cooperation, security sector reform, and peacebuilding strategies for sensitive border areas. The heads of missions expressed concerns regarding the limitations to cross-border collaboration. While the United Nations missions, and UNMIL in particular, have sought to assist UNOCI throughout the recent crisis, constraints on asset-sharing across borders limited the level of assistance provided.

XVII. Public information

63. The public information component of UNMIL has conducted several workshops for journalists and media executives. It also commenced a community-level video outreach programme and has continued its sensitization programmes on rehabilitation and reintegration. UNMIL Radio has expanded its coverage throughout the country and is currently broadcasting from Gbarnga, Saniquellie, Ganta, Zwedru, Voinjama and Harper.

XVIII. Mission support

64. The UNMIL administrative component has expanded its operations throughout the country. Nevertheless, challenges remain in providing the quantities of construction materials needed for the refurbishment of UNMIL-occupied buildings, road maintenance and repair, and other construction tasks. A coastal support vessel has been utilized extensively to support military contingents deployed in locations with suitable port access, particularly at Harper in Maryland county where there is a limited road network.

XIX. Observations

65. UNMIL has continued to make progress in stabilizing Liberia. Major milestones have been reached in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The peace process is now at a critical juncture, with the focus of attention rapidly shifting to the preparations for the October 2005 elections, the urgent need to resettle internally displaced persons and refugees and provide reintegration opportunities for ex-combatants, and further the extension of State authority nationwide.

66. At this point in the peace process, many serious issues remain to be effectively addressed, so that the gains made so far are not undermined. In this context, the capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to provide basic

services to the population remains very limited. Chairman Bryant and the National Transitional Government have taken some steps to try to address the overwhelming needs of the people of Liberia. However, much more remains to be done. It is important that the arrears in payments of civil servants' salaries be eliminated. Additionally, the National Transitional Government should urgently implement strict measures that would effectively address corruption, and ensure transparency in the management of public funds and agencies, in order to build the confidence necessary to attract further donor funding for reconstruction. The Liberians themselves and the international community should consider the benefits of increasing independent oversight of the Government's public revenue management.

67. Furthermore, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, assisted by UNMIL, should actively engage and consult with civil society. Such outreach should be part of an overall strategy to enhance public understanding of and promote support for the transitional process. Meanwhile, the National Transitional Government also needs to expedite the extension of State authority nationwide and ensure that local administrators, the police and the judiciary receive the support they need to perform their functions effectively.

68. The continuing negative effect of the divisions within LURD on the capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement remains a serious concern. It is deplorable that some individuals are continuing to pursue narrow factional agendas and seek to disrupt the operations of the National Transitional Government. It is imperative that the Liberian parties eschew factional interests and work in the national interest to ensure the smooth implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

69. The disturbances that occurred in the country between 28 and 31 October exposed underlying problems which urgently need to be addressed, including by UNMIL, in order to guard against recurrences of violence. In this context, the religious and ethnic dimensions assumed by the disturbances are deeply troubling. The National Transitional Government of Liberia should make every effort to promote reconciliation and religious tolerance among the diverse groups in the country.

70. As an essential element in promoting national reconciliation, holistic, coherent and long-term programmes should be implemented to meet the reintegration needs of ex-combatants, as well as the resettlement needs of internally displaced persons and refugees. At the same time, the threat posed by the over 100,000 unemployed, volatile and restive ex-combatants to security and stability in the country and elsewhere must be taken most seriously. In this regard, concrete steps need to be taken to ensure that they are urgently provided with educational, training and reintegration opportunities to help them achieve productive lives.

71. While donors have made commendable contributions to the rehabilitation and reintegration process, a major and dangerous shortfall in funding remains, amounting to some $60 million for ex-combatants alone. Donors are strongly encouraged to provide further resources. Such an investment at this critical time would allow for the provision of urgently needed assistance for vulnerable groups, which in turn would help promote stability and the consolidation of peace.

72. The protracted delay in arriving at a consensus among the Liberians regarding the legislation for the October 2005 elections is also of some concern. UNMIL,

ECOWAS and other international partners should continue to work with the National Elections Commission, the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly to ensure that a legal framework for the elections that meets international standards is adopted without further delay. The Liberian parties should be reminded of the importance of overcoming remaining obstacles and of ensuring that the elections are held on schedule.

73. The support of UNMIL for the law enforcement, judicial and corrections institutions includes assistance in improving professional capacity and mobilizing resources to meet infrastructural and other needs. Although progress continues to be made in both areas, it is seriously constrained by shortfalls of funding. I would urge that donors urgently consider providing resources for strengthening these key sectors which form the foundation for building a society based on the rule of law. The promotion of national reconciliation is another important area, for which a truth and reconciliation commission provides an invaluable mechanism. The National Transitional Legislative Assembly should be urged to expedite passage of the draft legislation needed to establish the commission for the National Transitional Government of Liberia should provide it with all possible support so as to facilitate an early commencement of its work.

74. The transition to peace after years of civil conflict or unrest in Liberia has been marked by a range of formidable challenges, which must be taken up decisively to guard against possible setbacks. It is important that the people of Liberia break with the violence of the past and demonstrate that they are ready to build lasting peace and stability. Furthermore, the Liberian leaders should be reminded of their personal responsibility for ensuring that the peace process remains on track. At the same time, the sustained support and engagement of the international community are vital in helping ensure that there is continued progress and that the underlying causes of the conflict in Liberia are addressed. The active and long involvement of the regional leaders has been particularly critical in efforts to restore peace in Liberia. In this context, close cooperation among ECOWAS, the African Union and UNMIL constitutes a most valuable asset and should be further strengthened to help ensure that the transition process leading to elections in October 2005 proceeds smoothly.

75. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for their contribution to the progress made during the period under review. I would also like to express my gratitude to the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS leaders, members of the International Contact Group of Liberia, United Nations organizations, humanitarian organizations and numerous bilateral donors, for their steadfast and continuing efforts to return peace to Liberia.

Annex I

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength (as at 1 December 2004)

Country	Military observers	Military component			Civilian police component
		Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Argentina			6	18	2
Bangladesh	17	10	3 179	3 206	23
Benin	1			1	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				0	17
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	10	557	572	25
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
Egypt	8			8	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	17	9	2 543	2 569	
Fiji				0	30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5			5	30
Germany					4
Ghana	11	2	842	855	36
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		8	422	430	
Jamaica				0	10
Jordan	7	9	115	131	134
Kenya	3	4		7	15
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	19
Malaysia	10			10	
Mali	3	2		5	
Namibia	3	5	860	868	6
Nepal	5	1	40	46	256
Niger	2			2	4
Nigeria	20	11	1 643	1 674	152
Norway				0	6
Pakistan	12	6	2 739	2 757	22
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	2		5	
Philippines	2	2	163	167	30
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal				0	2

Country	Military observers	Military component			Civilian police component
		Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Romania	2			2	
Russian Federation	6			6	20
Samoa				0	20
Senegal	3	4	599	606	10
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	8
South Africa		3		3	
Sri Lanka				0	11
Sweden		3	229	232	6
Togo		1		1	
Turkey				0	34
Uganda				0	20
Ukraine	3	1	300	304	11
United Kingdom		3		3	
United States of America	6	5		11	68
Uruguay				0	2
Yemen				0	4
Zambia	3			3	28
Zimbabwe				0	30
Total	**195**	**115**	**14 231**	**14 541**	**1 104**

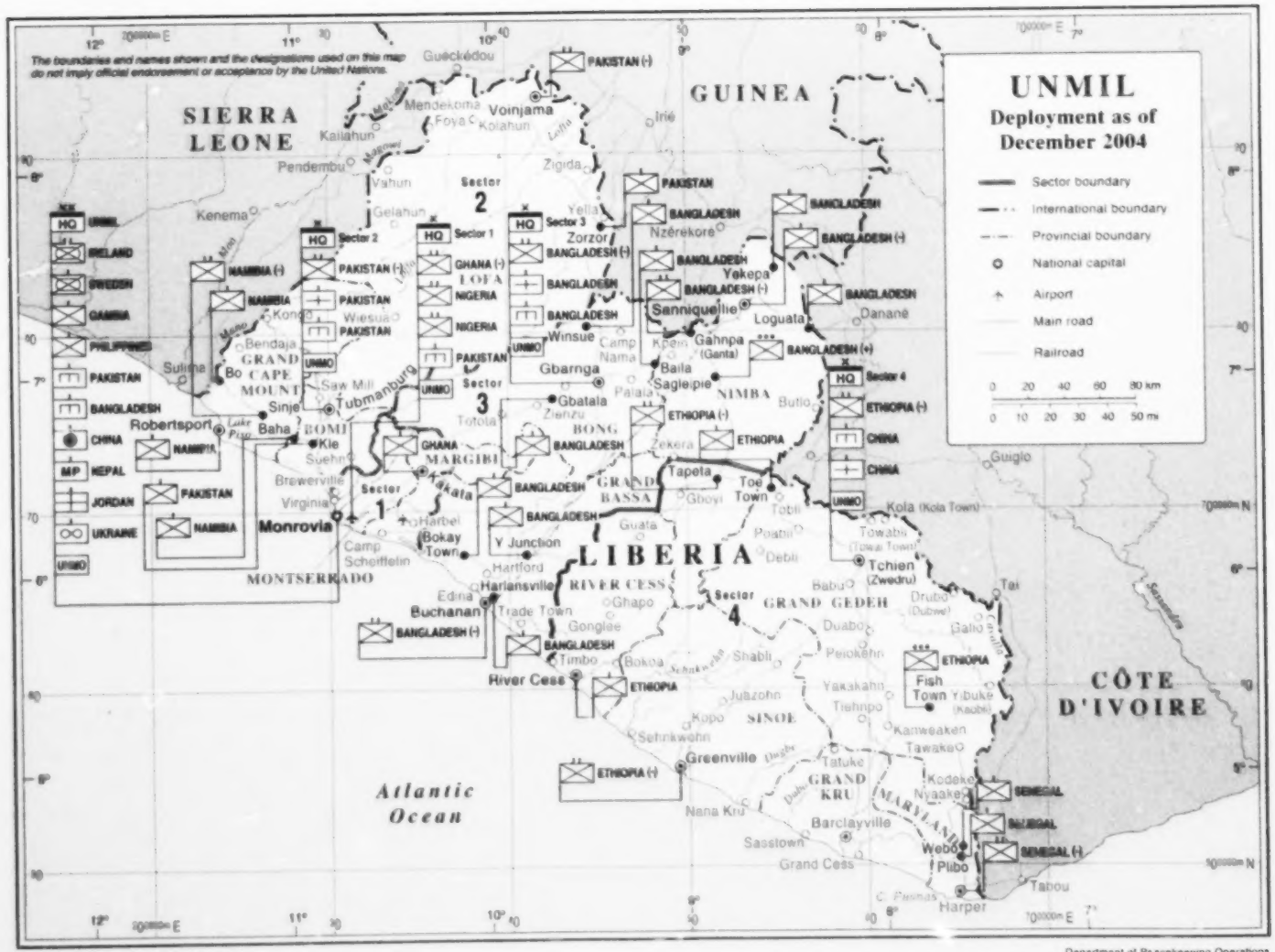
Annex II

List of treaties signed, ratified and acceded to by Liberia on 22 September 2004

1. The five signed treaties are: (a) the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; (b) the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (c) the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; (d) the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and (e) the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

2. The 10 treaties acceded to are: (a) the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; (b) the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; (c) the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; (d) the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel; (e) the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (f) the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (g) the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (h) the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (i) the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; and (j) the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

3. The three ratified treaties are: (a) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; (b) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and (c) the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.



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